

## TEACHERS TRAINING NEEDS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN OSHIMILI NORTH AND SOUTH OF DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

GLORIA C. UGWU, JULIE U. IBIAM, OSITA V. OSSAI, ANTHONIA N. NGWOKE,  
EMMANUEL C. OKENYI, C. ORAELOSI & CLARA O. IFELUNNI

*Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education University of Nigeria, Nsukka*

### ABSTRACT

*The descriptive survey research sought to identify training needs of teachers for the implementation of the preprimary education curriculum in Oshimili North and South of Delta State, Nigeria. The study was guided by seven research questions and seven hypotheses. 608 teachers in preprimary sections in the 430 public primary schools in Oshimili North and South made up the population of the study. 280 of the teachers formed the sample. Questionnaire instrument was used for data collection. Data collected was analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. Among others, the major findings show that teachers very highly need to be trained in the use and mastery of the government approved pre-primary school curriculum contents and in the appropriate statement of instructional objectives. They also highly need to be trained in utilizing the play way methods of teaching preschoolers and instructional materials, caring materials and appropriate pre-school assessment techniques. They need to be highly trained in the proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons. Also, there is no significant difference in the views of teachers in the urban and rural schools on the training needs of pre-primary school teachers. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that these pre-primary school teachers be retrained and that pre-primary school teachers' preparation should be seriously embarked on by the government as well as quality control by the National, State and LGEA desk officers.*

**KEYWORDS:** Teachers Training Needs & Preprimary School Curriculum

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### INTRODUCTION

Preprimary or early childhood education is the foundation for life-long learning. It is the bedrock upon which other levels of education are set. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education, NPE (2013), preprimary education is the education given in an educational institution to children prior to their entering primary school. It includes the crèche, nursery and kindergarten. According to Maduwesi (2005), preprimary education encompasses the care, education and the physical, mental, social and emotional development of children below six years. Ugwu and Ibiham (2011) see early childhood education as a process of education planned to develop in children within the ages of 2-5 the habits, attributes and skills needed for primary education. It is a period of life that holds the key to the overall maximum development of a child.

The early years in life are the most important in the formation of intelligence, personality and social behavior of a child. That is why, according to Ejeh (2006), modern societies show serious concern for the education of their young ones by providing the needed support to prepare them to succeed in life. That is why pre-primary

education stage, according to Ibiam (2011) is a crucial period for the development of the mental functions of children which include all learning areas namely language literacy development, development of skills in psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains. Similarly, Cherry (2011) also explained that preprimary education stage is a time for remarkable cognitive, social and emotional development. It is not only a period for analyzing physical growth but also a time of remarkable mental development which is usually all encompassing. From the foregoing, it is obvious that the early years in life are the most important in the formation of intelligence, personality and social behavior of a child. It is a period when experiences with family members, other adults and peer groups influence the quality of their learning as well as development. It is in line with this that the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2003) states that children exposed to early learning are more likely to be productive, law abiding, intelligent and sociable. In recognition of the importance of this level of education, the Federal Government of Nigeria gave official recognition of this level of education and articulated its objectives in her National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013).

The Federal Government of Nigeria undertook some responsibilities so as to ensure that these goals are achieved. One of such responsibilities is to make provision in teacher education programmes for specialization of adequate number of teachers in early childhood education. This is because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. According to Ugwu (2011), a teacher is one who teaches, guides, instructs, trains or helps another in the process of learning. A pre-primary education teacher, therefore, is a person who cares for young children within 0-5 years while teaching them a variety of things that target their developmental skills. Such teachers are trained in the theory and practice of early childhood education. Such teachers assist the children in the development of social skills, facilitate emotional stability, assist in the development of inquisitiveness and the exploration of their environment.

In spite of government's promise to produce early childhood education teachers in adequate quantity, the availability and quality of pre-primary education is doubtful. This doubt arises from the observed fact that school administrators employ trained primary school teachers while proprietors of private schools even employ untrained teachers. Since these teachers are not specialists at this level, they need to be trained to ensure the achievement of the objectives of early childhood education. Training, according to Bhatia (2005), can be in-service or pre-service and is the process of acquiring concepts, knowledge, skills and attitudes that result in better performance in a job. In this context, primary school teachers that are teaching pre-primary school children need to be retrained through in-service training. This need arose because, according to Bhatia, the quality and experiences of a teacher affect the quality of education provided to the children. To train these teachers, it is necessary to identify their training needs.

Training needs refer to the differences between what the teachers already know and what they are required to know in order to achieve the desired objectives. These teachers need to be trained in those aspects of pre-primary education theories and practices that were not part of their primary teacher education programme. This is to enable them to implement the pre-primary education curriculum effectively. Such teachers, according to Obiweleozo (2011) need to understand how children develop and learn. This is due to the fact that most of them teach whatever they like in the preschools instead of basing their teaching on the principles of early childhood education in line with its curriculum contents and methodology.

Curriculum, in this context, refers to a document which specifies the different components of teaching and learning such as learning contents, instructional objectives, methodology, instructional materials and techniques for assessment in pre-primary education. It is these components, according to Chidi (2011) that guide the teachers in the

design, implementation and evaluation of instruction. It is on the objectives of this level of education that the pre-primary school curriculum is anchored. According to Ibiam (2011), pre-primary education curriculum is the context and organization of preschool programme which has much impact on children's development characteristics such as physical, mental, social and emotional development. The Nigerian Education Research and Curriculum Development Centre (NERDC), in collaboration with United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) developed series of government approved curricula for Nigerian pre-primary schools. Unfortunately, most of the current pre-primary school teachers neither know about the existence of such curricula nor have knowledge about their implementation.

To implement curriculum implies the teacher's ability to put the curriculum contents and instructional guidelines to use practically in the classroom. To implement the preschool curriculum, the teacher needs to adopt appropriate methods and materials to guide children's learning and involve them in interaction with the learning activities. The teacher, according to Morrison (2004) also needs to break the curriculum into syllabus, scheme of work, units and lesson plans and apply other practices from early childhood teaching models like Montessori, Highscope, Reggio Emilia, among others. The teacher should be able to abide by the stipulations of both the National Policy on Education and the National Minimum Standards for the administration of early child care centres. However, most preschool teachers do not possess most of this knowledge. As a result, they need to be retrained to acquire this knowledge to be able to implement the pre-school curriculum for effective and efficient preschool teaching and learning.

Preschool curriculum contents which include those activities that preschoolers learn from books, oral instructions and experiences from their environment, according to Morrison are developed according to children's ages, interests and needs. But most of the preschool teachers resort to school-made curricula because, according to Ejeh (2006), they lack the knowledge of these contents. Therefore, these teachers need to be retrained to master these contents. As regards instructional objectives which are the expected learning outcomes of particular lessons that reflect the three educational domains namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor, Ejeh states further that in most preschools in the study area, their objectives are mainly on the cognitive. Preschoolers only memorize and regurgitate facts due to lack of trained preschool teachers.

Furthermore, The Federal Republic of Nigeria, in her National Policy on Education (FRN,2013), stipulates that the teaching method at this level should be by play way methods and mother tongue should be used for instruction. Regrettably, most of the preschool teachers do not have knowledge of these policy statements and as a result, use English Language for instruction and un-interactive methods of teaching. Therefore, such teachers need training on these policy statements and teaching methods. Similarly, preschool teachers need to be trained on the selection and use of instructional materials. This is because these are the materials, according to National Teachers Institute (NTI, 2007), that a teacher uses to bring out the meanings of all that the teacher is teaching. In other words, they are used to elucidate the contents of the curriculum. Apart from that, there is also a need to periodically evaluate the children to know the extent of achievement of preschool objectives, hence the need for performance assessment.

Performance assessment, according to Morrison (2004) is a process of collecting and interpreting the result of various educational objectives in order to ascertain the progress made by the preschoolers in physical, mental, social and emotional skills. According to Gredler (2009), it involves the measure of cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains. Preschool has both formal and informal assessment techniques. Incidentally, preschool teachers in most schools lack the knowledge of these assessment techniques thereby making the achievement of learning objectives doubtful. In view of

these, the teachers need to be retrained in order to attain minimum standards. The minimum standards document contains the guidelines for nurturing and educating children within 0-5 years. The purpose is to ensure that quality pre-primary care and education is provided to the preschool child. Unfortunately, most of our preschool teachers have no knowledge of this due to a lack of professional training as well as monitoring by the government. This therefore calls for the preschool teachers to be retrained.

However, training needs of teachers for implementation of the pre-primary school curriculum may be influenced by the teachers' location. In this context, location refers to urban and rural areas. Urban area, according to Brown (2000) is an area with high population of about 5000 people with street pattern, presence of electricity and establishments with employees. It has facilities, social amenities and good transportation network. On the other hand, rural area is characterized by low population density, small settlement and agricultural area (Ajayi, 2008). Lack of financial resources, issues of long distance transportation, lack of facilities and social amenities, according to Ajayi are some challenges rural areas face and which hinder the attraction and training of school teachers and administrators. This, according to the author has led to poor attendance and participation of children in learning activities. As a result, rural preschool children lag behind their urban counterparts who have more and better qualified teachers, more facilities and other social amenities in their physical, cognitive and social development.

To achieve the objectives of preschool education in Nigeria, the government made a lot of promises to ensure its effective implementation. Unfortunately, Maduewesi (2005), noted that preschool education in Nigeria received only lip service from the government. This is because the government initially left the operation of preschool education mostly in the hands of private individuals and organizations. Therefore, it neither monitors the operation of these schools nor established model pre-primary schools to be emulated. Also, teachers use poor teaching methods and fail to use the mother tongue or play way methods as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). As a result, preschool education in Nigeria, being mainly private initiative, the government is powerless to sanction the operators who overstep their bounds and the system is operated the way they like, especially in their curriculum delivery mode. The resultant effect is that Nigerian preschoolers are denied their right to proper care and education in their country.

Consequently, this situation called for government concern and efforts to create quality pre-primary education for all Nigerian preschoolers. This led the Federal government of Nigeria, through the Universal Basic Education Act (UBE, 2004), to integrate pre-primary education into all the existing public primary schools. As a result, trained primary school teachers are placed to teach preschoolers. Although these primary school teachers have National Certificate in Education (NCE), bachelor and even master's degrees, their practices seem to be faced with some shortcomings. It was observed that none of the preschool teachers are specialists in preschool education and use poor or primary school methods of teaching preschoolers. Also, most schools have no standard curriculum and in those that have, the teachers lack the knowledge of its implementation which makes them teach what and how they like. In addition, these teachers seem to be incompetent as they seem to lack the pre-requisite knowledge, skills and attitude needed for this level of education. Many of these teachers regard teaching preschoolers as punishment. It is in line with this that Dike (2009) noted that primary school teachers training did not cater for this level of education and as such, these teachers need to be retrained. It is as a result of this that the researchers carried out this scientific investigation to identify those preprimary school curriculum contents that these teachers need for effective implementation of the preschool curriculum in Oshimili North and South of Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Learning Outcomes of Presentation**

- To examine the training needs of teachers in the use and mastery of the government approved pre-primary school curriculum contents and in the appropriate statement of instructional objectives.
- To determine the training needs of teachers in utilizing the play way methods for teaching preschoolers and instructional materials, caring materials and appropriate pre-school assessment techniques.
- To identify training needs of the teachers in the proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons.
- To find out the significant difference in the views of teachers in the urban and rural schools on the training needs of pre-primary school teachers.

The study was guided by the following research questions and hypotheses that were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the teacher training needs for adequate mastery of the government approved pre-primary school curriculum contents?
- What are the teachers' training needs for setting appropriate preschool instructional objectives?
- What are the teachers' training needs for appropriate use of play way methods of teaching preschoolers?
- What are the teachers' training needs for adequate use of teaching and learning materials?
- What are the teachers' training needs for adequate use of pre-primary school caring materials?
- What are the teachers' training needs for the use of appropriate preschool assessment techniques?
- What are the teachers' training needs for proper presentation of preschool lesson?

### **Hypotheses**

- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers in urban and rural schools on preschool teachers' training needs in the mastery of government approved pre-primary education curriculum contents.
- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of urban and rural on pre-primary school teachers' training needs in stating appropriate preschool learning objectives.
- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of urban and rural teachers on preschool teachers' training needs for appropriate use of play way methods in teaching preschoolers.
- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of urban and rural teachers on preschool teachers training needs for adequate use of teaching and learning materials.
- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of urban and rural teachers on preschool teachers' training needs for adequate use of caring materials.
- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of urban and rural teachers on the training needs of preschool teachers for the use of appropriate assessment techniques.

- There is no significant difference in the mean responses of urban and rural teachers on the training needs of preschool teachers for proper presentation of preschool lessons.

## METHOD

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The area of the study was Oshimili North and South of Delta State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all the 608 trained primary school teachers, 321 from Oshimili North and 287 from Oshimili South operating pre-primary education in the pre-primary sections in the 52 public primary schools in the area. Out of this, 383 are from the urban area while 225 are from the rural area. The sample was made up of 280 (166 from urban and 114 from rural) trained primary school teachers teaching pre-primary school classes drawn using multi stage sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a 43-item questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument had two sections, A and B. While Section A dealt with the respondents' demographic information, Section B contained seven clusters used to identify teachers' training needs for adequate mastery of government approved pre-primary curriculum contents, appropriate statement of pre-primary school instructional objectives, the use of play way method in teaching preschool children, the use of developmentally appropriate teaching materials, use of preschool caring materials, appropriate use of preschool assessment techniques and proper preschool lesson delivery. A draft of the instrument was validated by experts in Childhood Education, Education Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation who confirmed the relevance, standard and clarity of the instrument. The items were weighted on a four point Likert type response format of Very Highly Needed (VHN), Highly Needed (HN), Moderately Needed (MN), Not Needed (NN). The responses were weighted 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researchers to the respondents with the assistance of research assistants and retrieved on the spot. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Any mean from 2.5 and above were accepted while any below 2.5 was rejected. T-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** What are the teachers' training needs for adequate mastery of government approved pre-primary curriculum contents?

**Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Teachers on the Training needs for Adequate Mastery of Government Approved Pre-Primary Curriculum Contents.**

S/N	Items	Mean	N	SD	Decision
1	Good mastery of topics on physical development	4.00	280	7.00	VHN
2	Acquire good knowledge of topics on affective development	3.41	280	0.47	HN
3	Gains good mastery of topic on cognitive development	3.10	280	0.31	HN
4	Master topics on food and nutrition	3.59	280	0.30	VHN
5	Be conversant with topics on health issues	3.32	280	0.49	HN
6	Have good knowledge of safety measure	3.71	280	0.89	VHN
	Cluster mean	3.59	280	0.36	VHN

Key: HN – Very Highly Needed, MN = Highly Needed, Moderately Needed, NN = Not Needed

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on teachers' training needs for the mastery of government approved pre-primary school curriculum contents.

**Table 2: T-Test Analysis of the Difference in the Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Urban and Rural School Teachers on the Mastery of Pre-Primary School Curriculum Contents**

School Location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	2-tail sig.	Decision
Urban	114	15.22	0.83	243.04	0.04	0.004	Rejected
Rural	166	21.13	0.83				

Table 1 presents the opinions of teachers on the training needs of teachers for adequate mastery of the government approved pre-primary curriculum contents. Items 1,4,6 were rated very highly needed with means score of 4.00, 3.59 and 3.71 respectively. This means that teachers very highly need to be trained to have good knowledge of topics on physical development, food and nutrition and safety measures of preschoolers. On the other hand, items 2,3 and 5 were rated Highly needed with mean scores of 3.41, 3.10 and 3.32 respectively. This denotes that the respondents maintained that teachers highly need to be trained on the cognitive and affective development of preschooler as well as the topics on health issues of preschoolers. The overall mean for the respondents shows a cluster mean of 3.59. This indicates a decision level of very highly needed which has been rated above the accepted criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore, the table shows that teachers very highly need to be trained to have adequate mastery of government approved pre-primary curriculum contents. The corresponding hypothesis in Table 2 shows that t-calculated value is 0.04 and the sig. (2-tailed) is 0.004 at the probability level of 0.05 and 243.04 degree of freedom. Since the t-cal is greater than the sig. (2-tailed), the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of teachers for adequate mastery of pre-primary school curriculum contents.

**Research Question 2:** What are the teachers' training needs for stating appropriate pre-primary school instructional objective?

**Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Teachers on the Teachers' Training needs for Stating Appropriate Pre-Primary Instructional Objectives**

S/N	Items	Mean	N	SD	Decision
7	State instructional objectives that meet curriculum expectation	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
8	State objectives that are specific to children skills and knowledge	3.68	280	0.49	VHN
9	State objectives that reflect children's ages, interest and needs	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
10	State objective that reflect only the cognitive domain	2.64	280	0.93	MN
11	State objectives that can be demonstrated by children	2.75	280	0.91	HN
	Cluster mean	3.21	280	0.47	HN

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the teachers training needs for stating appropriate pre-primary school instructional objectives.

**Table 4: T-Test Analysis of the Difference in the Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Teachers on Stating Appropriate Pre-Primary School Instructional Objectives**

School Location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	2-tail sig.	Decision
Urban	114	16.04	1.36	242.20	0.06	0.95	Accepted
Rural	166	16.05	1.36				

Table 3 shows the responses of teachers on the teachers' training needs for stating appropriate pre-primary school instructional objectives. Items 7,8,9 were scored 4.00, 4.00 and 3.68 respectively. This deduced that teachers very highly need to be trained in stating instructional objectives that meet the curriculum expectations, objectives that are specific to children's skills and knowledge and objectives that reflect children's ages, interests and needs. On the other hand, item 11

was rated highly needed with mean score of 2.75. This indicates that teachers highly need to be trained in stating objectives that can be demonstrated by preschoolers. Item 10 was rated moderately needed with mean score of 2.64 which is above the acceptable criterion of 2.50. This indicates that teachers moderately need to be trained on stating instructional objectives that reflect only the cognitive domain. The overall mean for all the respondents shows a cluster mean of 3.21. This indicates a decision level of highly needed. Therefore, the table shows that teachers highly need to be trained on stating appropriate pre-primary school instructional objectives. Table 4, containing the corresponding hypothesis shows the summary of the t-test analysis of the difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the teachers' training needs for stating appropriate pre-primary school instructional objectives. The calculated t-value of 0.06 is less than the sig. (2-tailed) of 0.95 at 243.20 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the sig. (2-tailed) value, the null hypothesis stands accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of teachers for stating appropriate pre-primary school instructional objectives.

**Research Question 3:** What are teachers' training needs for the use of play way methods of teaching preschoolers?

**Table 5: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Teachers on the Teachers Training needs for t Appropriate use of Play way Methods of Teaching Preschoolers**

S/N	Items	Mean	N	SD	Decision
12	Have good knowledge of different play activities for teaching preschoolers	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
13	Provide little time for indoors and outdoor play activities for preschoolers	1.64	280	0.93	MN
14	Organize different play activities during lessons	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
15	Provide appropriate materials for play activities during lessons	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
16	Observe and supervise children's play during lessons	2.73	280	0.91	HN
17	Discuss and ask children question on play activities	4.00	280	0.31	VHN
	Cluster mean	339	280	0.31	HN

**H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of teachers for the proper use of appropriate play way methods of teaching preschoolers.

**Table 6: T-Test Analysis of the Differences in the mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Urban and Rural School Teachers on the Training needs of Teachers for the Appropriate use of Play way Methods of Teaching Preschoolers**

School location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	2-tail sig.	Decision
Urban	114	20.61	1.97	242.80	0.00	0.24	Accepted
Rural	166	20.61	1.97				

Table 5 shows the responses of teachers on teachers' training needs for the appropriate use of play way methods of teaching preschoolers. Items 12, 14, 15, and 17 were rated very highly needed with mean scores of 4.00 respectively. This shows that teachers very highly need to be trained on different play activities used in teaching preschoolers, organization of play activities during lessons, provision of proper materials for play activities during lessons and on the use of discussion and questioning on play activities during lessons. Item 16 was rated highly needed with mean score of 2.73. This indicates that teachers highly need to be trained on the observation and supervision of children's play during lessons. Item 13 was rated moderately need with mean score of 1.64. This shows that teachers moderately need to be trained to provide little time for indoor and outdoor play activities. The overall mean score of the respondents shows a cluster mean



of 3.39. This shows a decision level of highly needed which was rated above the acceptable criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore, the table indicates that teachers in Oshimili North and South highly need to be trained on the appropriate use of play way methods of teaching preschoolers. The corresponding hypothesis in Table 6 shows the summary of t-test analysis of the difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the teachers training needs for appropriate use of play way methods of teaching preschoolers. It indicates that the calculated  $-t$  value of 0.00 is less than the sig. (2-tailed) of 0.24 at 242.80 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated  $t$ -value is less than the sig.(2-tailed) value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the teachers' training needs for the appropriate use of play way methods of teaching preschoolers.

**Research Question 4:** What are the teachers training needs for the use of pre-primary school instructional materials?

<b>Table 7: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Teachers on the Training needs of Teachers for the Appropriate use of Re-Primary School Instruction Materials.</b>					
<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Decision</b>
18	Have good knowledge of types of pre-primary school instructional materials	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
19	Make good use of government approved pre-primary curriculum	3.95	280	0.49	VHN
20	Use varieties of pre-primary instructional materials in lessons	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
21	Make proper use of teachers' guide	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
22	Use instructional materials that relate to curriculum contents	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
23	Use of cultural suitable materials	1.00	280	0.90	NN
24	Use safe and non-tonic materials	3.81	280	0.59	VHN
25	Use of materials that are above children's ages	1.90	280	0.90	MN
26	Organize materials according to learning centres	2.10	280	0.31	MN
	Cluster mean	3.05	280	0.30	HN

**H04:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teaching on the training needs of teachers for the use of pre-primary school instructional materials.

**Table 8: T-Test Analysis of the Difference in the Mean Scores of Urban and Rural School Teachers on the Training needs of Teachers for the use of Pre-Primary School Instructional Materials.**

<b>School location</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t-cal</b>	<b>2-tail sig.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Urban	114	27.98	1.34	242.74	0.04	0.97	Accepted
Rural	166	27.98	1.34				

Table 7 presents the responses of teachers on the teachers' training needs for the use of pre-primary school instructional materials. Items 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24 were rated very highly needed with mean scores of 4.00, 3.95, 4.00, 4.00 and 3.81 respectively. This means that teachers very highly need to be trained on different types of pre-primary school instructional materials, on the use of government approved pre-primary school curriculum, varieties of instructional materials in teaching, teachers' guide, materials that are related to curriculum contents and safe and non-toxic material. Items 25 and 26 were rated moderately needed with mean scores of 1.90 and 2.10. This shows that teachers moderately need to be trained in using materials that are above children's ages and organizing instructional materials around learning centres. Item 23 was rated not needed with a mean score of 1.00. This indicates that teachers do not need to be trained in using culturally suitable instructional materials. The overall mean score for the respondents shows a cluster mean of 3.05. This indicates a decision level of highly needed. This table therefore shows that teachers highly need to be trained on the use of pre-primary school instructional materials. The corresponding hypothesis in Table 8 presents the summary of t-test

analysis of the difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of teachers for the use of appropriate pre-primary school instructional materials. The analysis shows that the calculated t-value of 0.04 is less than the sig (2-tailed) value at 242.74 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the sig. (2-tailed) value, the null hypothesis stands upheld. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs for teachers for the appropriate use of pre-primary school instructional materials.

**Research question 5:** What are the teachers training needs for the use of pre-primary school caring materials.

**Table 9: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Teachers on Teachers' Training needs for Effective use of Pre-Primary School Caring Materials**

S/N	Items	Mean	N	SD	Decision
27	Demonstrate the use of feeding materials in feeding preschoolers	3.36	280	0.93	HN
28	Monitor children's health status using health facilities	3.59	280	0.49	VHN
29	Protect children using blankets and mosquito nets	3.59	280	0.49	VHN
	Cluster mean	3.51	280	0.64	VHN

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of teachers for the use of pre-primary school caring materials.

**Table 10: T-Test Analysis Of The Difference In The Mean Scores And Standard Deviation Of Urban And Rural School Teachers On Teachers' Training Needs For The Use Of Appropriate Pre-Primary School Caring Materials**

School location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	2-tail sig.	Decision
Urban	114	6.54	1.83	243.15	0.06	0.04	Rejected
Rural	166	10.53	1.83				

Table 9 reveals the opinions of teachers on the teachers' training needs for effective use of pre-primary caring materials. Items 28 and 29 were rated very highly needed with mean scores of 3.59 respectively. This displayed opinion of teachers indicate that teachers very highly need to be trained in monitoring children's health status using health facilities properly and in protecting children using blankets and mosquito nets. Item 27 was rated highly needed with mean score of 3.36. This shows that teachers highly need to be trained on feeding preschoolers using feeding materials properly. The overall mean of the respondents shows a cluster mean of 3.51. This shows a decision level of very highly needed which has been rated above the acceptable mean of 2.50. Therefore, this table indicates that teachers very highly need to be trained on the effective use of pre-primary school caring materials. The t-test analysis result in table 10 shows that t-calculated value of 0.06 is greater than the sig.(2-tailed) value of 0.04 at 243.15 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the sig. (2-tailed) value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural teachers on the training needs of teachers on the use of pre-primary school caring materials.

**Research Question 6:** What are the teachers' training needs for the use of appropriate pre-primary school assessment techniques?

**Table 11: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Teachers on Teachers' Training needs for the use  
Appropriate Pre-Primary School Assessment Techniques**

S/N	Items	Mean	N	SD	Decision
30	Have good knowledge of assessment needs of preschoolers	1.80	280	0.83	MN
31	Use observation to identify children's behaviour and performances	1.00	280	0.90	NN
32	Use checklist to observe and check what children can do.	3.29	280	0.91	HN
33	Use portfolio to document and assess children achievement	3.05	280	1.41	HN
34	Use Denver development screening test-revised to screen children with serious developmental delay	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
35	Use of developmental mile stone to assess children's development	4.00	280	0.00	VHN
	Cluster mean	339	280	0.31	HN

**H0<sub>6</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of teachers for the use of appropriate pre-primary school assessment techniques.

**Table 12: T-Test Analysis of the Difference in the mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Urban and  
Rural School Teachers on Teachers' Training needs for the use of Appropriate Pre-Primary School  
Assessment Techniques**

School location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	2-tail sig.	Decision
Urban	114	17.75	3.52	243.3	0.06	0.96	Accepted
Rural	166	17.72	3.33				

Table 11 shows the responses of teachers on the teachers' training needs for the use of appropriate pre-primary school assessment techniques. Item 30 was rated moderately needed with a mean score of 1.80. This shows that teachers moderately need to be trained on the assessment needs of preschoolers. Item 31 was rated not needed with a mean score of 1.00. This indicates that teachers do not need to be trained on the use of observation to identify children's behaviour and performance. Items 32 and 33 were rated highly needed with mean scores of 3.29 and 3.05 respectively. This reveals that teachers highly need to be trained in the use of check list to observe and check what children can do and on the use of portfolio to document and assess children's achievements. Items 34 and 35 were rated very highly needed with means scores of 4.00 respectively. This shows that teachers very highly need to be trained on the use of Denver Development Screening Test-Revised to screen children with serious developmental delay and use of developmental mile stones in assessing preschoolers' development. The overall mean for the respondents shows a cluster mean of 2.85. This shows a decision level of moderately needed which has been rated above the acceptable mean of 2.50. Therefore, this table shows that teachers moderately need to be trained in the use of appropriate pre-primary school assessment techniques. The corresponding hypothesis in Table 12 shows the summary of the t-test analysis of the difference in the mean scores of urban and rural teachers on the training needs of teachers for the use of appropriate pre-primary school assessment techniques. The t-test analysis indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.06 is less than the sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.96 at 243.3 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the t-cal is less than the sig. (2-tailed), the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of teachers for the use of appropriate pre-primary assessment techniques.

**Research Question 7:** What are the teachers' training needs for the proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons?

**Table 13: Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers on the Training needs for Proper Presentation of Pre-Primary School Lessons**

S/N	Items	Mean	N	SD	Decision
36	Use of mother tongue as medium of instruction	3.36	280	0.93	HN
37	Use of attention grabbing techniques to introduce new lessons	3.37	280	0.06	HN
38	Present lessons in logical order	3.16	280	0.80	HN
39	Guide and direct preschoolers' learning activities using play activities	2.58	280	0.63	HN
40	Present children's lessons with varieties of instructional materials	3.65	280	0.63	VHN
41	Engage children in enough time for manipulative, explorative and experimental activities	3.40	280	0.96	HN
42	Discuss with children and ask them questions and observe what children do using questions	2.60	280	1.20	HN
43	Assess children after teaching	3.36	280	0.93	HN
	Cluster mean	3.19	280	0.99	HN

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of pre-primary school teachers for proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons.

**Table 14: T-Test Analysis of the Difference in the Mean Scores of Urban and Rural School Teachers on the Training needs of Teachers on the Proper Presentation of Pre-Primary School Lessons**

School location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	2-tail sig.	Decision
Urban	114	25.38	3.58	242.14	-0.13	0.90	Accepted
Rural	166	25.54	3.58				

Table 13 shows the responses of teachers on the teachers' training needs for proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons. All the items except item 40 were all rated highly needed with mean score of 3.36, 3.37, 3.16, 2.58, 3.40, 2.60 and 3.36 respectively. This indicates that teachers, very highly need to be trained in the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction, use of attention grabbing techniques to introduce new lessons, presentation of new lessons in logical order, use of play way methods in presentation of children's learning activities, giving enough time for preschoolers' manipulative activities, observation and discussion with preschoolers using questions and assessing preschoolers after teaching. Item 40 was related very highly needed with a mean score of 3.65. This indicates that teachers highly need to be trained in the presentation of children's learning with varieties of instructional materials. The overall mean for the respondents shows a cluster mean of 3.19. This shows a decision level of highly needed which has been rated above the acceptable mean of 2.50. Therefore, this table shows that teachers highly need to be trained on the proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons. The corresponding hypothesis in Table 14 shows the summary of the t-test analysis of the difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the teachers training needs for proper pre-primary school lesson presentation. The t-test analysis indicates that the t-cal value of -0.13 is less than the t-crit (sig. 2-tailed) value of 0.96 at 243.14 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the t-cal value is less than the sig. (2-tailed) value, the null hypothesis stands accepted. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on teachers training needs for proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons.

## DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The result of this study indicates that teachers very highly need to be trained in the mastery of government approved pre-primary school curriculum contents. Based on the findings of the study, teachers very highly need to be trained to have good knowledge of topic on physical development, food and nutrition and safety measures of preschoolers. The result also

revealed that teachers highly need to be trained on affective and cognitive development topics as well as health issues of preschoolers. This is an indication that teachers lack the knowledge of the contents of government approved pre-primary school curriculum and as such resort in teaching whatever they like. The result is in line with the findings of the research carried out by Maduewesi (2005) on what was happening in pre-primary schools which showed that schemes of work used there are far from the government approved curriculum contents prescription. There is no uniformity in the curriculum contents and teachers were unqualified to implement the government approved curriculum contents. The findings of this study is also in consonance with the findings of the research studies carried out by Anyanwu (2009) on the training needs of teachers and vision 20-20 which revealed that ECC teachers like pediatrician need special training to enable them master basic skills in all the subject areas to ensure maximum coping of preschoolers in higher studies. A corresponding hypothesis concluded that there is significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers in pre-primary school teachers' training needs in the mastery of pre-primary curriculum contents.

The study also revealed that teachers highly need to be trained in stating appropriate pre-primary instructional objectives. It revealed that teachers very highly need to be trained on stating instructional objectives that meet the curriculum expectations, objectives that are specific to children's ages, interests and needs. The result also revealed that teachers highly need to be trained in stating instructional objectives that can be demonstrated by the preschoolers. This implies that teachers lack the knowledge of stating appropriate pre-primary education instructional objectives and most times, those teachers teach without having any objective in mind. This result is in line with the findings of Gredler (2009) in a study which revealed that student teachers do not know how to state instructional objectives that reflect the three educational domains. Similarly, the result is in line with Ejeh's (2006) view that pre-primary school teachers only lay emphasis on cognitive domain in their teaching. A corresponding hypothesis showed that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on teachers training needs for stating appropriate pre-primary school instructional objectives.

The result also revealed that teachers highly need to be trained in using play way methods of teaching preschoolers. Based on the result, teachers very highly need to be trained on the different play activities used in teaching preschoolers, organization of play activities during lesson, provision of play materials during lessons and discussion of play activities with the preschoolers. Equally, the result revealed that teachers highly need to be trained in the observation and supervision of play activities during lessons. It also revealed that teachers do not need to be trained to provide little time for indoor and outdoor activities. This is an indication that teachers do not use play way methods in teaching preschoolers. The result is consistent with the findings of Ekanem, Essien and Ekenam (2011) on a research study which revealed that public schools do not use play facilities in teaching and learning while private schools use but lack spaces for play facilities. In the same vein, the result is also in conformity with the findings of Ugwu (2011) which revealed that play way methods are not used in pre-primary schools. Also, a corresponding hypothesis indicated that there was no difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on pre-primary school teachers; training needs in the appropriate use of play way method.

The study indicated that teachers highly need to be trained in the utilization of pre-primary school instructional materials. The findings of the study revealed that teachers very highly need to be trained on different instructional materials used in teaching preschoolers on the use of government approved curriculum, teachers guide, varieties of materials that relate to curriculum contents. The study also revealed that teachers highly need to be trained in the use of safe non-toxic

instructional materials and on the organization of instructional materials during lessons. It also revealed that teachers do not need to be trained in the use of materials that are above the ages of children and the ones that do not reflect the cultural background. This implies that teachers do not have the knowledge of preschool instructional materials as well as the usage. These findings support the findings of Ibiam (2011) in a research study which revealed that schools in Abia and Ebonyi States lack gender sensitive materials, UNICEF /State wide curriculum as well as ICT equipment, among others. A corresponding hypothesis indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the training needs of teachers for appropriate use of pre-primary school instructional materials.

The result further showed that teachers highly need to be trained on the effective use of pre-primary school caring materials. Based on the findings of the study, teachers moderately need to be trained in the use of feeding materials. The findings also revealed that teachers very highly need to be trained on the use of health facilities in monitoring children's health status and on the use of blanket and mosquito nets in protecting the children. This is an indication that preschool children in schools lack the basic care needed as stipulated in the national minimum standard. The result is in consonance with Ibiam (2011) findings which also revealed that schools in both Abia and Ebonyi States lack caring materials like sick bay, beds with mackintoshes or bed sheets. Furthermore, a supporting hypothesis revealed that there was significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on teachers' training needs for effective use of pre-primary school caring materials.

This study revealed that teachers highly need to be trained in the use of appropriate pre-primary school assessment techniques in assessing preschoolers. The study also showed that teachers moderately need to be trained in the assessment of preschoolers. The study revealed that teachers do not need to be trained in the use of observation to identify children's behaviours and performance. The findings equally indicate that teachers highly need to be trained in the use of checklist to observe and check what children can do and in the use of portfolio to document and assess children's achievement. Also, the findings revealed that teachers very highly need to be trained in the use of Denver Development Screening Test-Revised to screen children with services developmental delay and in the use of developmental milestones to assess preschoolers' development. This implies that both human and material resources are lacking for the conduct of pre-primary school assessment as teachers are unqualified and facilities are not provided. This makes the minimum standard for ECCE unattainable. The findings support the research findings by Obiweluzo (2011) which revealed that schools lack both specialist teachers and appropriate facilities for the conduct of pre-primary school assessment in schools. A corresponding hypothesis showed that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural school teachers on the teachers' training needs for the use of appropriate pre-primary school assessment techniques.

The study revealed that teachers highly need to be trained in the proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons. Also, teachers highly need to be trained in the uses of: mother tongue as medium of instruction, attention grabbing techniques to introduce new lessons, logical presentation of lessons, giving enough time for children's manipulative activities, observation and discussion with children using questions and assessing children appropriately. The study also revealed that teachers very highly need to be trained in using varieties of materials to present children's learning activities and on using play way methods to guide and direct children's learning activities. The findings are in line with the findings of Anyanwu (2007) which revealed that 80% of teachers use English Language as medium of instruction while only 20% use Igbo as medium of instruction. Similarly, the findings are in line with the findings of a study by Ugwu (2011) which revealed that teacher education programmes have not produced specialist teachers, mother tongue was not used as medium

of instruction, available toys were mostly used for recreation and not for instruction and play way methods are not used as instructional methods. In addition, a supporting hypothesis showed that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of urban and rural teachers on the teachers training needs for proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Among others, the major findings show that teachers very highly need to be trained in the use and mastery of the government approved pre-primary school curriculum contents and in the appropriate statement of instructional objectives. They also highly need to be trained in utilizing the play way methods for teaching preschoolers and instructional materials, caring materials and appropriate pre-school assessment techniques. They need to be highly trained in the proper presentation of pre-primary school lessons. Also, the study found no significant difference in the views of teachers in the urban and rural schools on the training needs of pre-primary school teachers.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

Based on the findings, it implies that:

- Schools should be supplied with government approved curriculum and teachers be trained in the usage;
- There is a need to train teachers on the appropriate statement of pre-primary instructional objectives in order to meet the curriculum expectations;
- Immediate steps should be taken to ensure that play way methods are used in teaching preschoolers as stipulated in the National Policy on Education as well as the National Minimum Standards;
- Immediate supply of instructional materials be done by both parents and the government as well as train the teachers in the usage;
- Provision of human resources, facilities and materials needed for the conduct of pre-primary school assessment should be urgently addressed;
- There is a need to provide facilities for nutrition, protection and health monitoring of children in pre-primary schools;
- Teachers' inability to use child-centred pedagogy in their lesson delivery need to be addressed urgently.

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